



THE HOUSE OF  
**MYSTERY**



WHO--OR WHAT--WAS  
**"THE MURDERER?"**

**30c**  
NO. 240  
APR.  
30530

DO YOU DARE ENTER... THE HOUSE OF

# MYSTERY



**DEATH IN THE  
GARDEN OF EVIL!**

JO



FATE DELIGHTS IN WEAVING LIVES WITH **TANGLED THREADS**--SO THAT THE FACES OF SAINTS AND SINNERS ARE INTERCHANGABLE! I AM **CAM**, CARETAKER OF THE 'HOUSE OF MYSTERY'--AND EVEN I CAN'T DISTINGUISH BETWEEN VICTIM AND KILLER! OFTEN ONE CAN'T DECIDE WHETHER **DR. JOHN FLORIUS**, WORLD-FAMOUS EXPERIMENTAL BOTANIST, **DESERVES TO BE NAMED**--

# The MURDERER



J3300

nomscans

AN EXCURSION INTO FEAR WITH:  
**ED FEDORY, BOB KANIGHER,  
E. R. CRUZ AND JOE ORLANDO.**

HOUSE OF MYSTERY, Vol. 25, No. 240, April, 1976. Published monthly by NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019. Carmine Infantino, Publisher. Joe Orlando, Editor. Paul Levitz, Assistant Editor. Sol Harrison, Vice President—Director of Operations. Bernard Koshdan, Vice President—Business Manager. Jack Adler, Production Manager. Second Class Postage paid at New York, N.Y. and additional mailing offices. Advertising Representative, Sanford Schwarz & Co., Inc., 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017, (212) 391-1400. Copyright © 1976 by National Periodical Publications, Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, are intended or should be inferred. Printed in U.S.A.

SUBSCRIPTION DEPT.: National Periodical Publications, Inc., 155 Allen Blvd., Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735. Rate \$3 in U.S.A. (\$4 elsewhere). Subscription is for consecutive issues totalling \$3.00 of their cover prices.

This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition, nor affixed to, nor as part of any advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever.



THE PITEOUS  
MOANS FROM DR.  
FLORIUS' GREEN-  
HOUSE ARE LOST  
AMIDST THE  
WHIPLASH OF  
LIGHTNING IN THE  
SINISTER SKIES...  
AND THE HOWLING  
OF THE MANIACAL  
WIND...

**CRAACK!**

**WYRROOOOOO!**

THEN--EVEN THE  
ELEMENTS ARE  
HUSHED AS DR.  
FLORIUS EMERGES  
...WITH HIS TRAY  
OF CHEMICALS  
NOW EMPTY--



THE TREES SEEM TO SHUDDER AT  
HIS PASSING... LIKE A SPAWN OF  
SATAN--A CAT YOWLS AS IT  
MEETS HIS EYES...



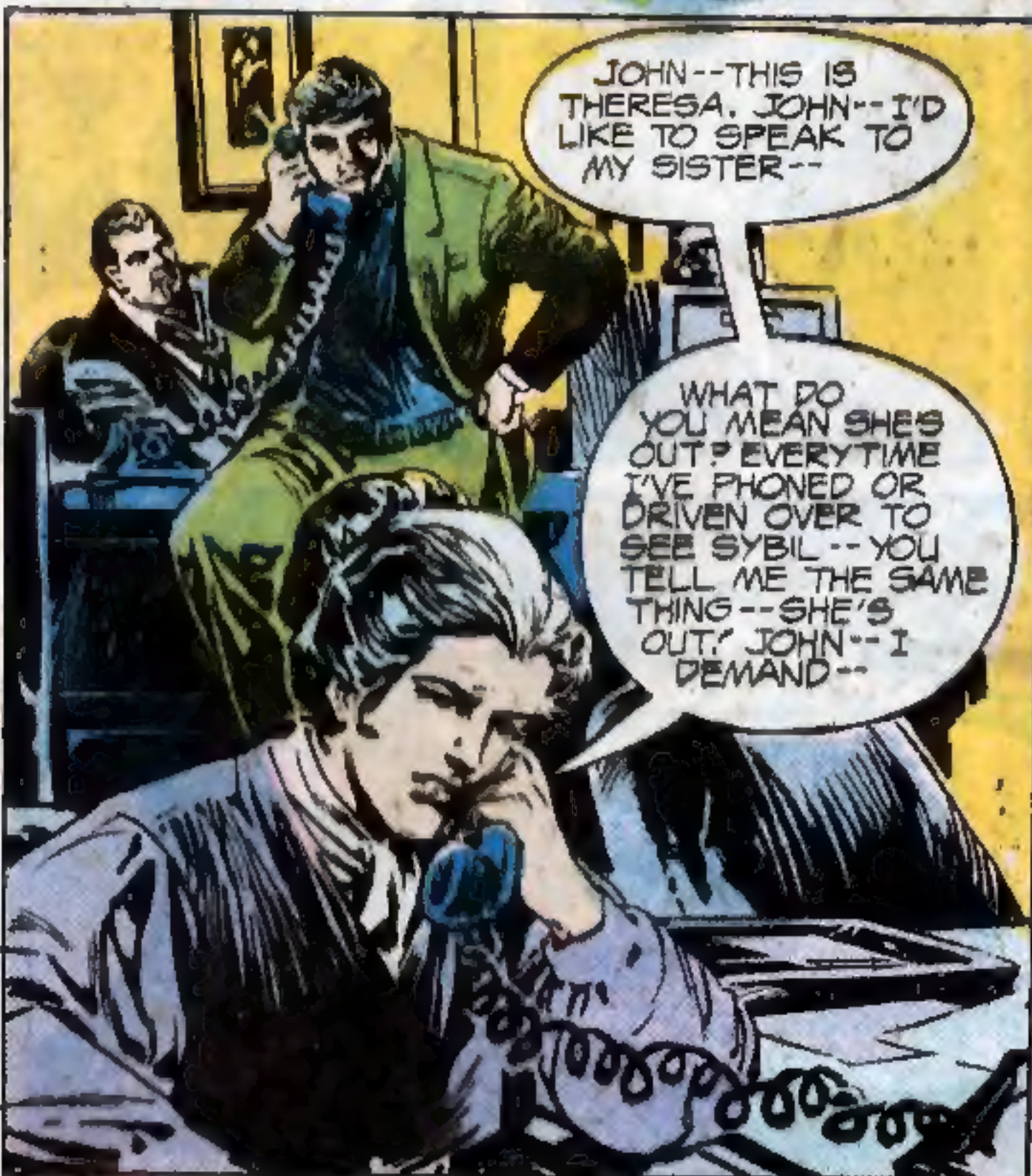
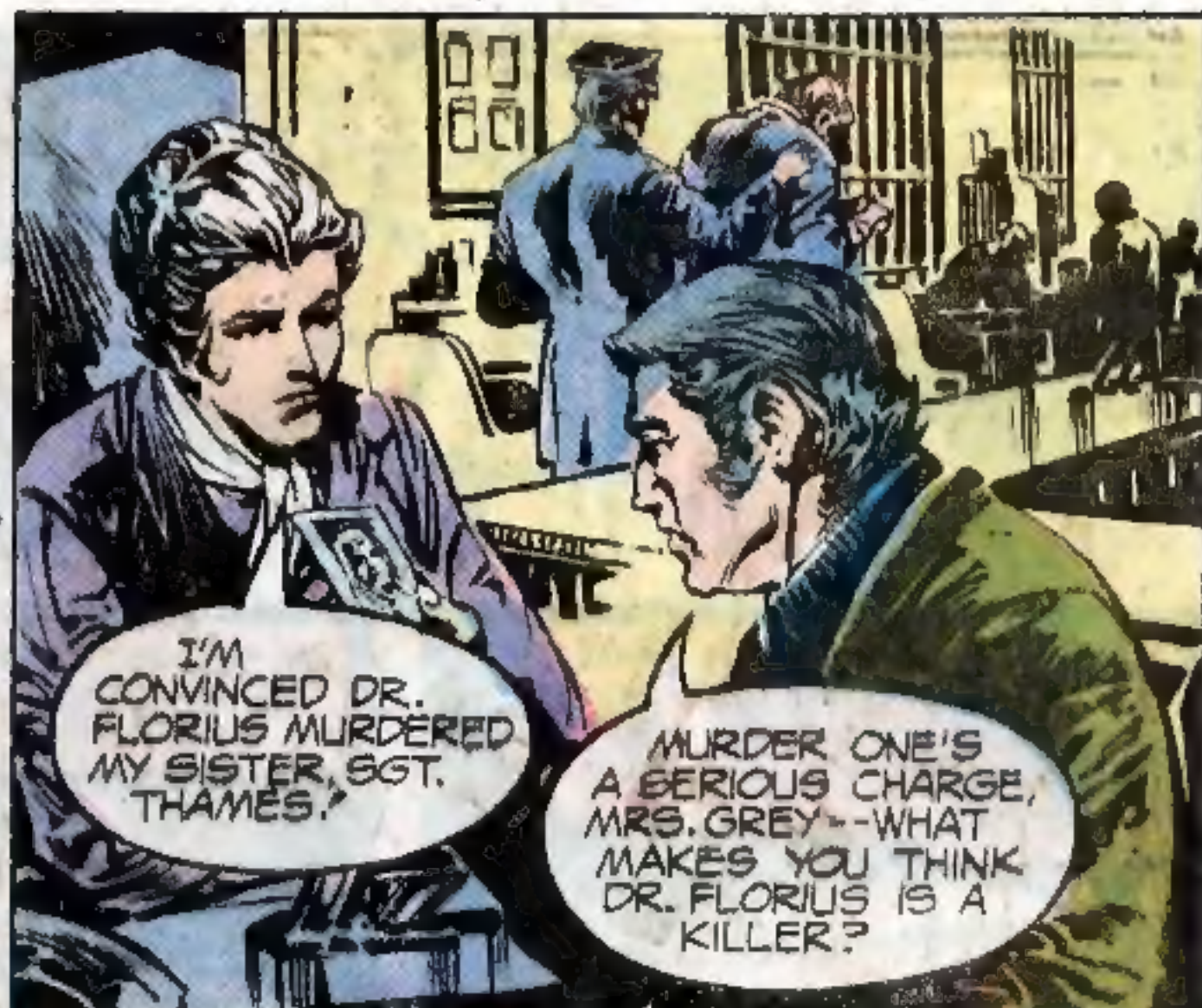
**EOWWWW!**

AND ONCE  
AGAIN...THE  
GREENHOUSE  
OF DR. FLORIUS  
RETAINS ITS  
ABOMINABLE  
SECRET.

**KWHAM!**

BUT THERE IS ONE WHO WOULD  
REVEAL THE SECRET TO THE WORLD...









THERESA'S  
LIKE A BLOOD-  
HOUND--SHE  
NEVER LETS GO!  
WHAT A PITY!



AT THAT THE SOUNDS OF  
UNEARTHLY SOBBING  
REVERBERATE FROM THE  
GREENHOUSE OF DR. JOHN  
FLORIUS...

AHHHHHHNNNN...



IT SEEMS AS IF  
THE HEAVENS WEEP  
IN SYMPATHY...

JOHN--  
JOHN...



AND EVEN A HEART  
OF STONE MUST  
MELT!

HELP...  
HELP...  
ENOUGH...  
ENOUGH...



BUT--NOTHING CAN  
MAKE DR. JOHN  
FLORIUS PAUSE ON  
HIS EERIE ERRAND...  
AND HIS SOLE  
**WITNESS** CAN  
COMMUNICATE ONLY  
WITH SATAN!

HAVE  
PITY--  
AHHHGGNNNNNNNN...

MEDWARRA

CONTINUED ON 35P PAGE FOLLOWING.

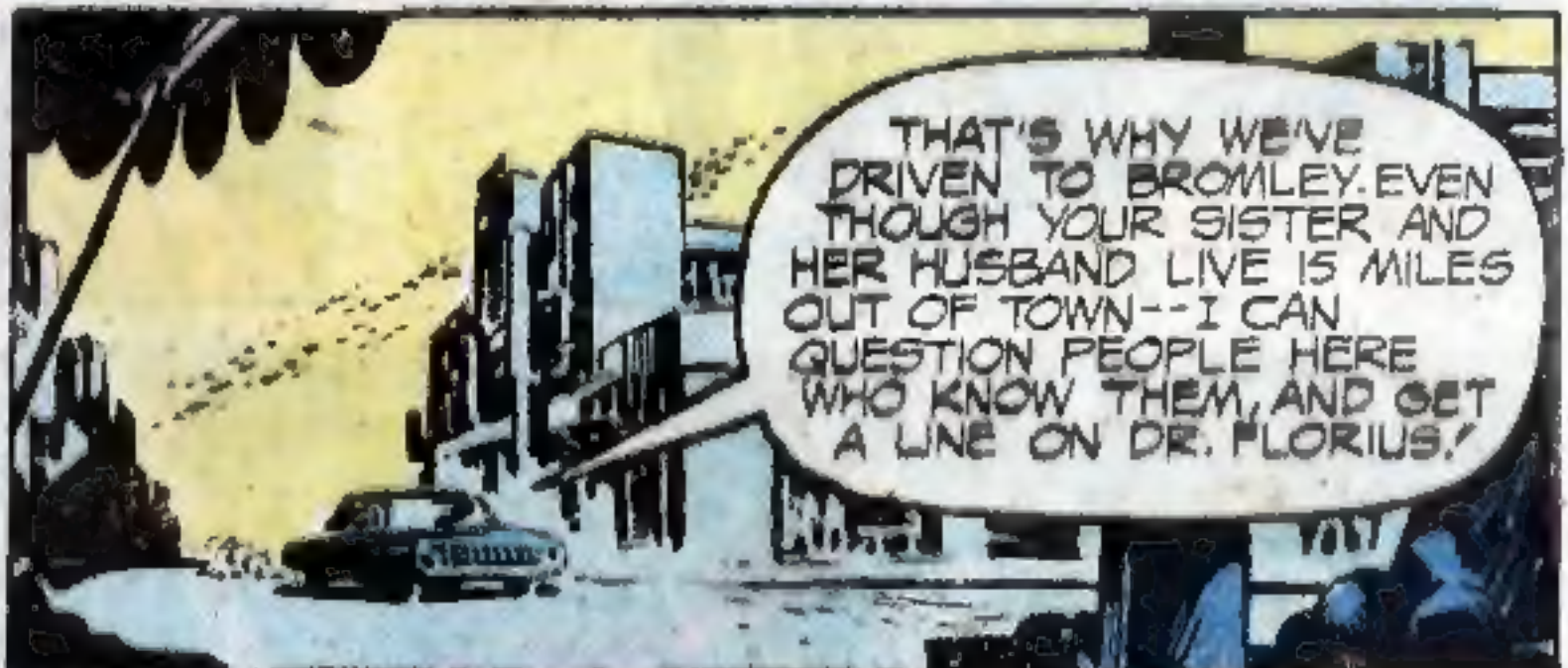




SHE WAS YOUNG... BEAUTIFUL... FULL OF LIFE-- AND DR. FLORIUS MURDERED HER! YOU **MUST** ARREST HIM!



YOU DON'T HAVE ANY **EVIDENCE**, MRS. GREY!-- JUST YOUR SUSPICIONS. THE GRAND JURY WON'T BUY A WOMAN'S INTUITION!



THAT'S WHY WE'VE DRIVEN TO BROMLEY. EVEN THOUGH YOUR SISTER AND HER HUSBAND LIVE 15 MILES OUT OF TOWN-- I CAN QUESTION PEOPLE HERE WHO KNOW THEM, AND GET A LINE ON DR. FLORIUS!



MRS. FLORIUS HASN'T BEEN HERE IN A MONTH TO STOCK UP-- DR. FLORIUS DOES THE SHOPPING NOW!

HE SURE BUYS AN AWFUL LOT OF CHEMICAL POISONS FOR THAT GREENHOUSE OF HIS!

THE DOC IS CLOSE-MOUTHED! HAS A BEER AND LEAVES!

MRS. FLORIUS HASN'T ATTENDED CHURCH IN A MONTH! WHEN I DROPPED IN-- THE DOCTOR SLAMMED THE DOOR IN MY FACE!



NOW-- DO YOU BELIEVE ME, SGT. THAMES? HE MURDERED SYBIL!

BELIEVING ISN'T EVIDENCE, MRS. GREY. I'VE GOT TO FIND COLD, HARD FACTS! STAY IN THE CAR-- I'M GOING TO QUESTION DR. FLORIUS!















SEEMS LIKE THERE ARE SHORTAGES OF JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING THESE DAYS -- FROM PAPER TO GASOLINE TO ELECTRICITY TO PLASTICS. IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU SICK, ISN'T IT? AND SICK IS THE WORD TO DESCRIBE WHAT YOU'RE ABOUT TO READ -- A STORY THAT DROVE ONE FELLOW TO A MOST UNIMAGINABLE SORT OF...



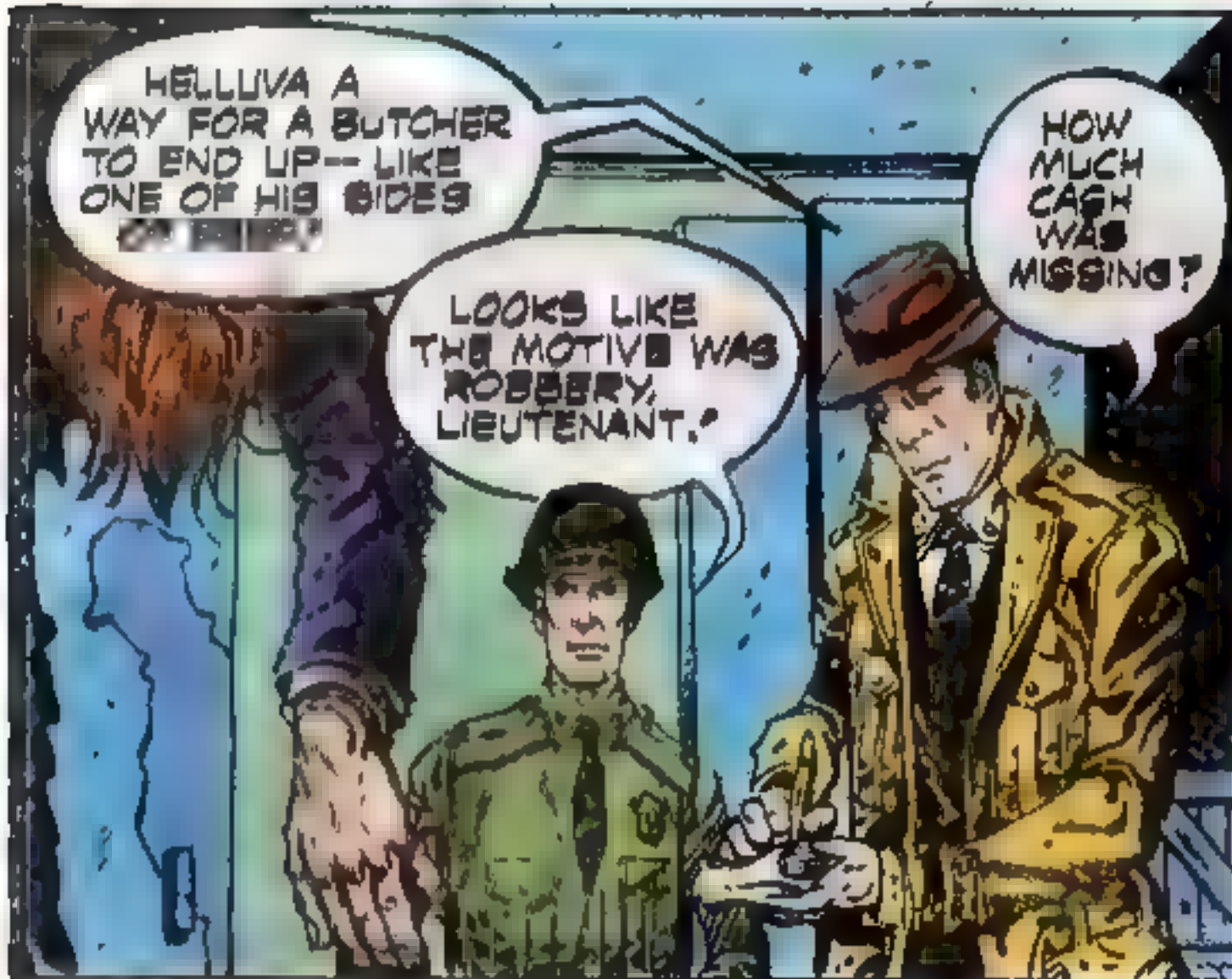
# Manslaughter

STORY BY: GARY BATES

ART BY: RUBENY



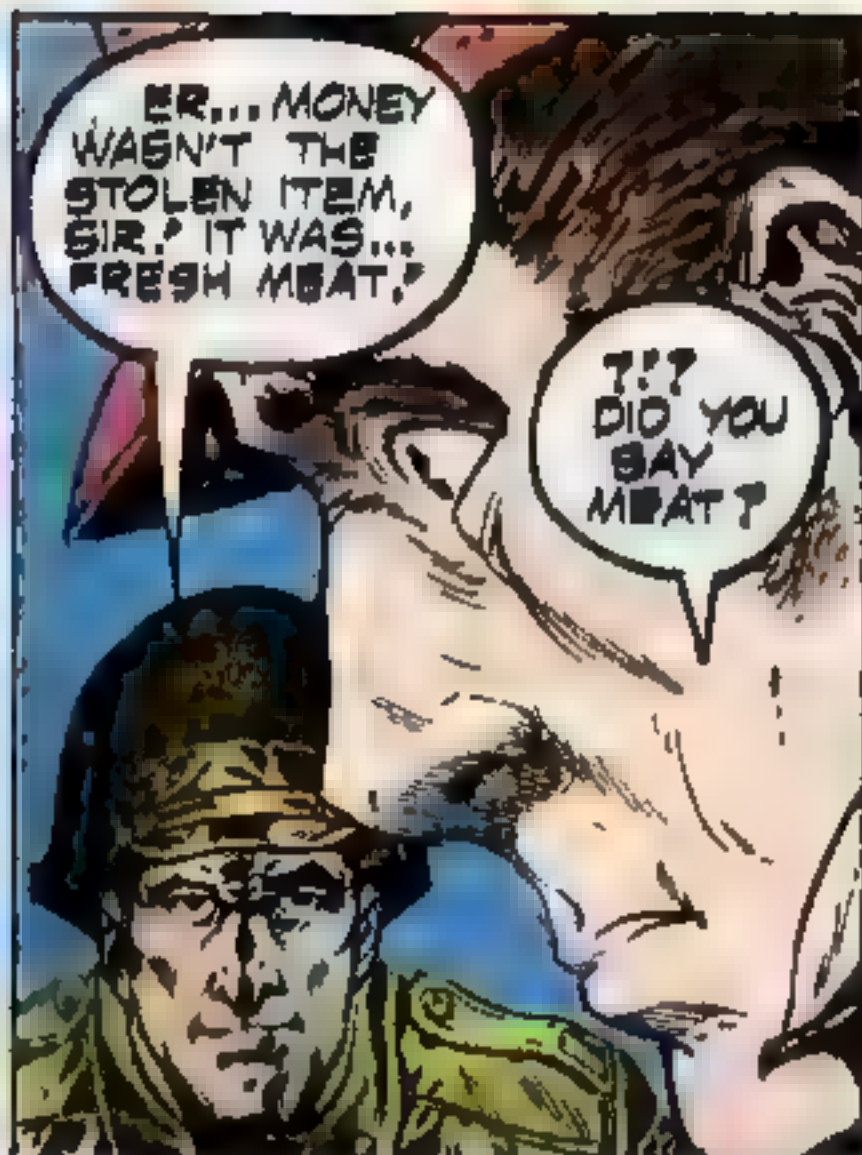




HELLUVA A WAY FOR A BUTCHER TO END UP-- LIKE ONE OF HIS SIDES OF BEEF!

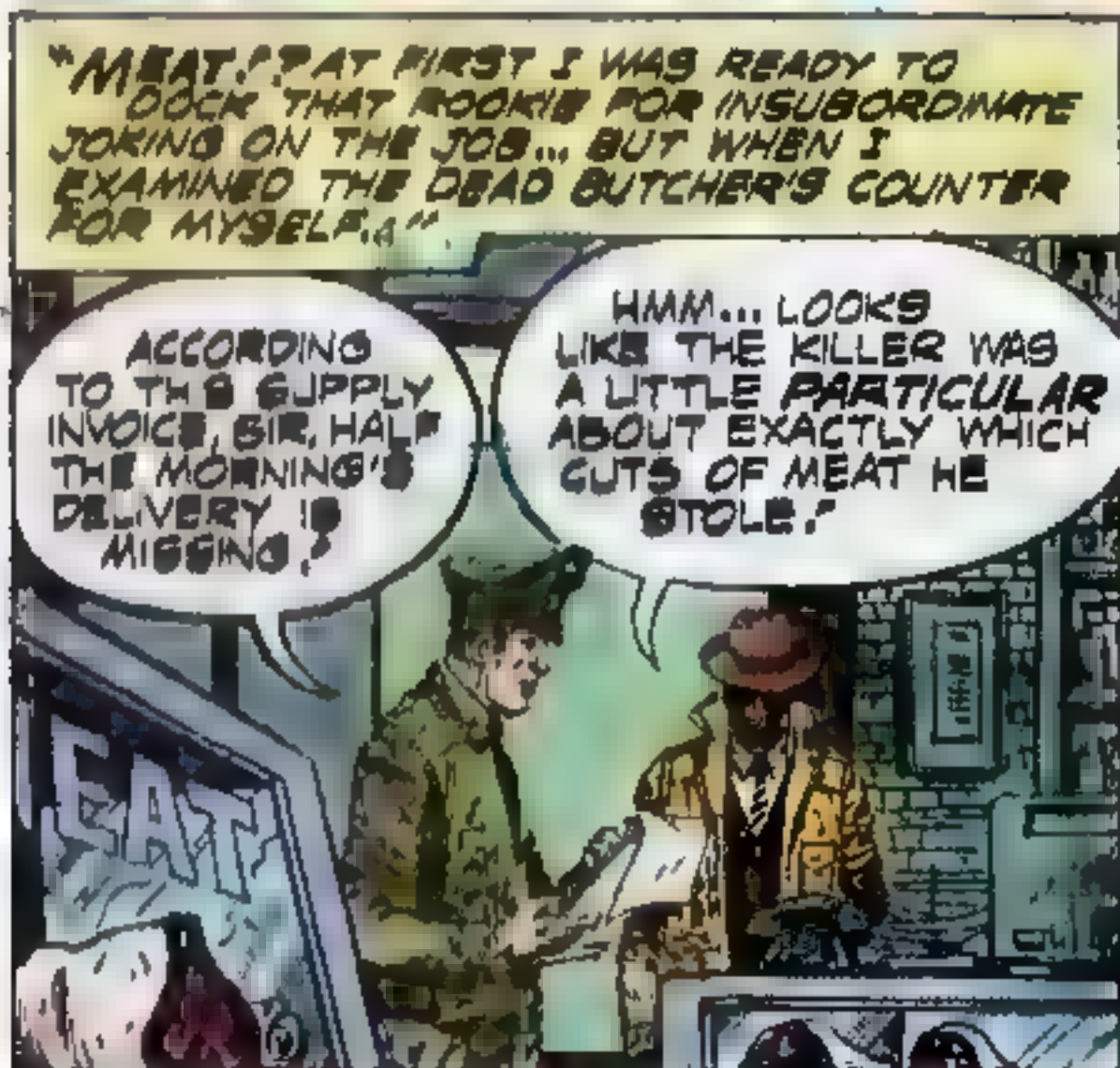
LOOKS LIKE THE MOTIVE WAS ROBBERY, LIEUTENANT.

HOW MUCH CASH WAS MISSING?



ER... MONEY WASN'T THE STOLEN ITEM, SIR. IT WAS... FRESH MEAT.

T?? DID YOU SAY MEAT?



"MEAT.?? AT FIRST I WAS READY TO DOCK THAT ROOKIE FOR INSUBORDINATE JOKING ON THE JOB... BUT WHEN I EXAMINED THE DEAD BUTCHER'S COUNTER FOR MYSELF."

ACCORDING TO THE SUPPLY INVOICE, SIR, HALF THE MORNING'S DELIVERY IS MISSING.

HMM... LOOKS LIKE THE KILLER WAS A LITTLE PARTICULAR ABOUT EXACTLY WHICH CUTS OF MEAT HE STOLE.

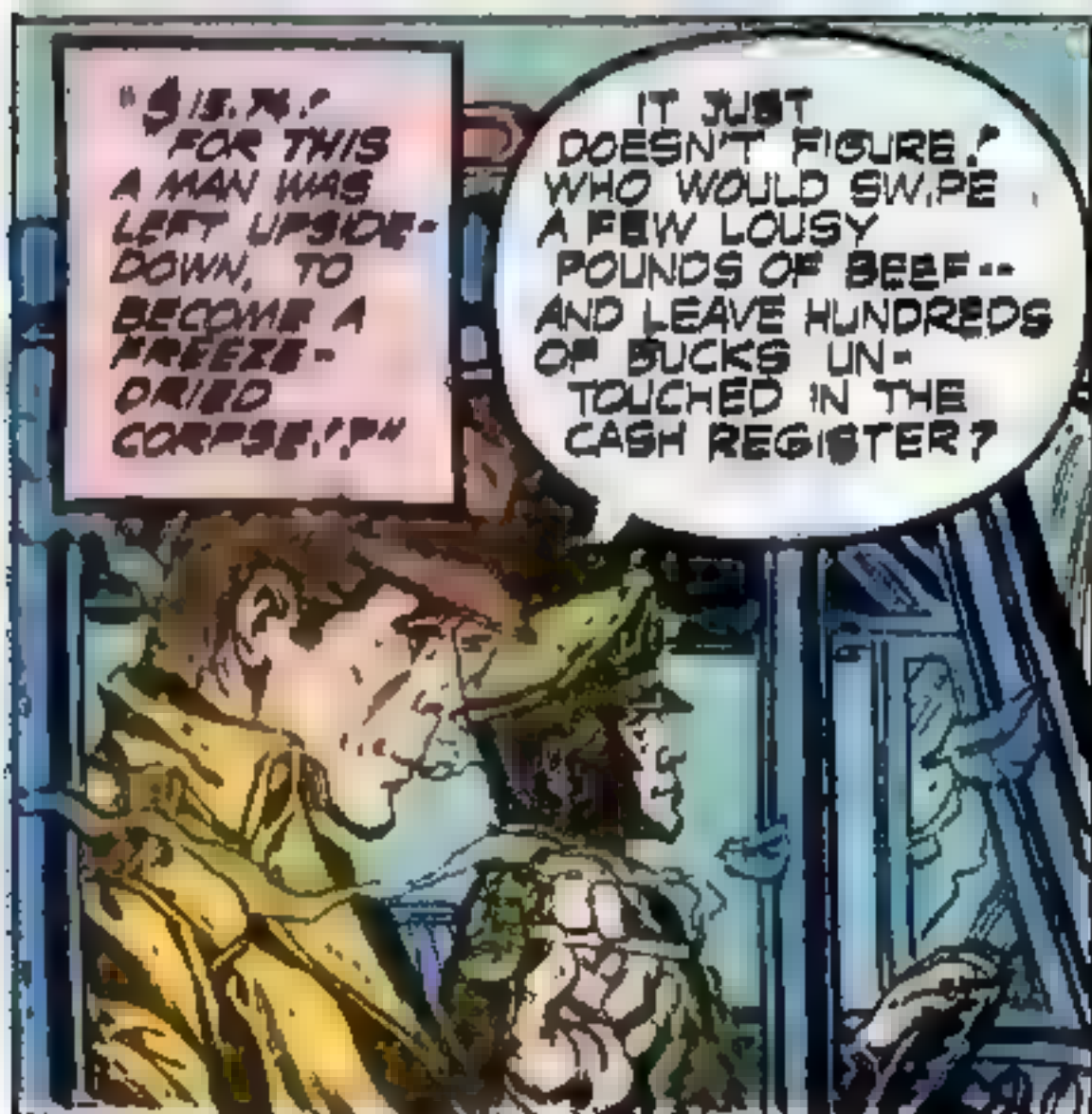


"ON THE WAY BACK TO HEADQUARTERS, AFTER FULLY EXAMINING THE SCENE OF THE CRIME..."

\$15.74.

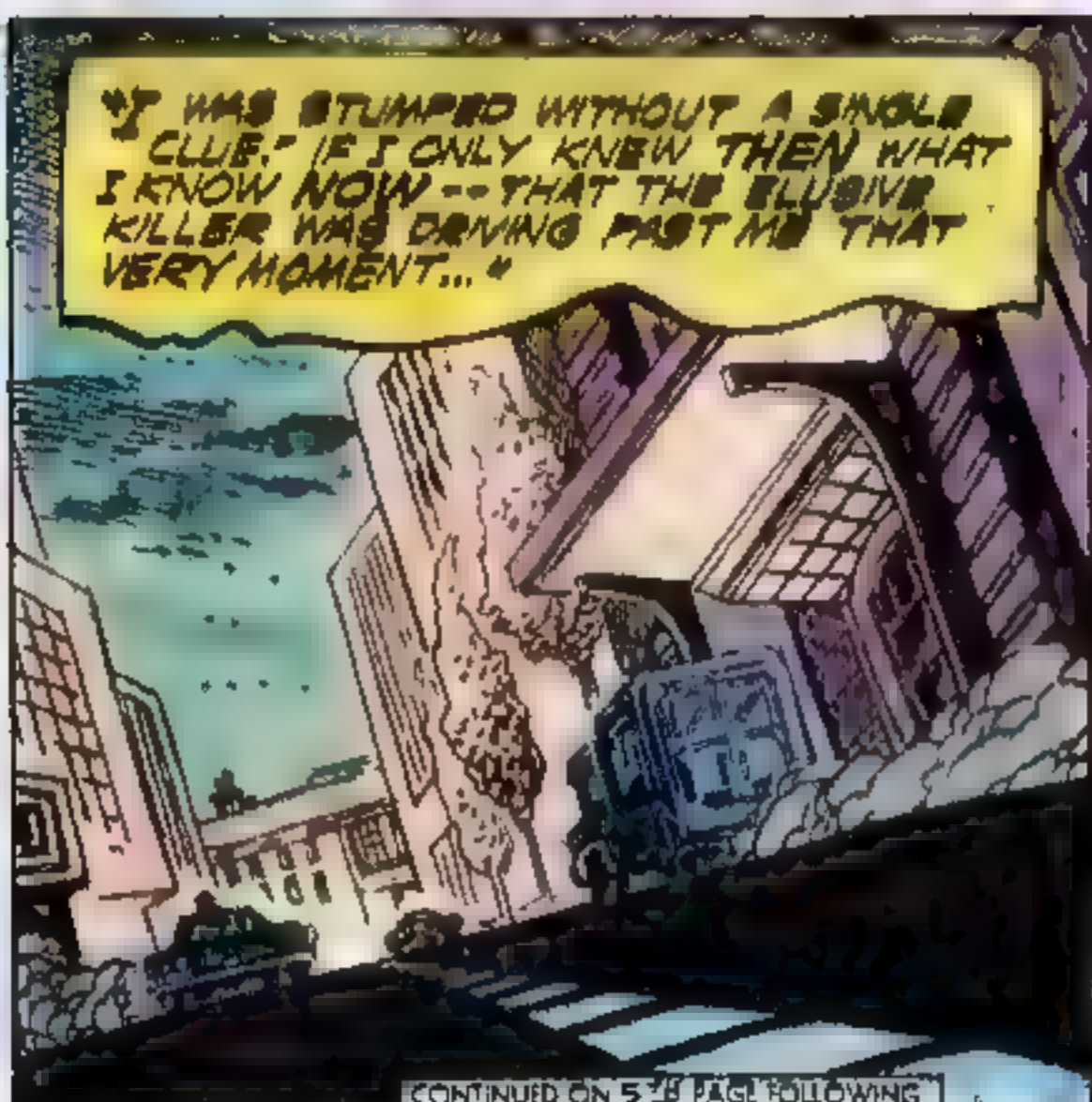
WHAT WAS THAT, PATROLMAN?

\$15.74 -- THAT'S WHAT THE TOTAL OF STOLEN MEAT CUTS CAME TO, SIR.



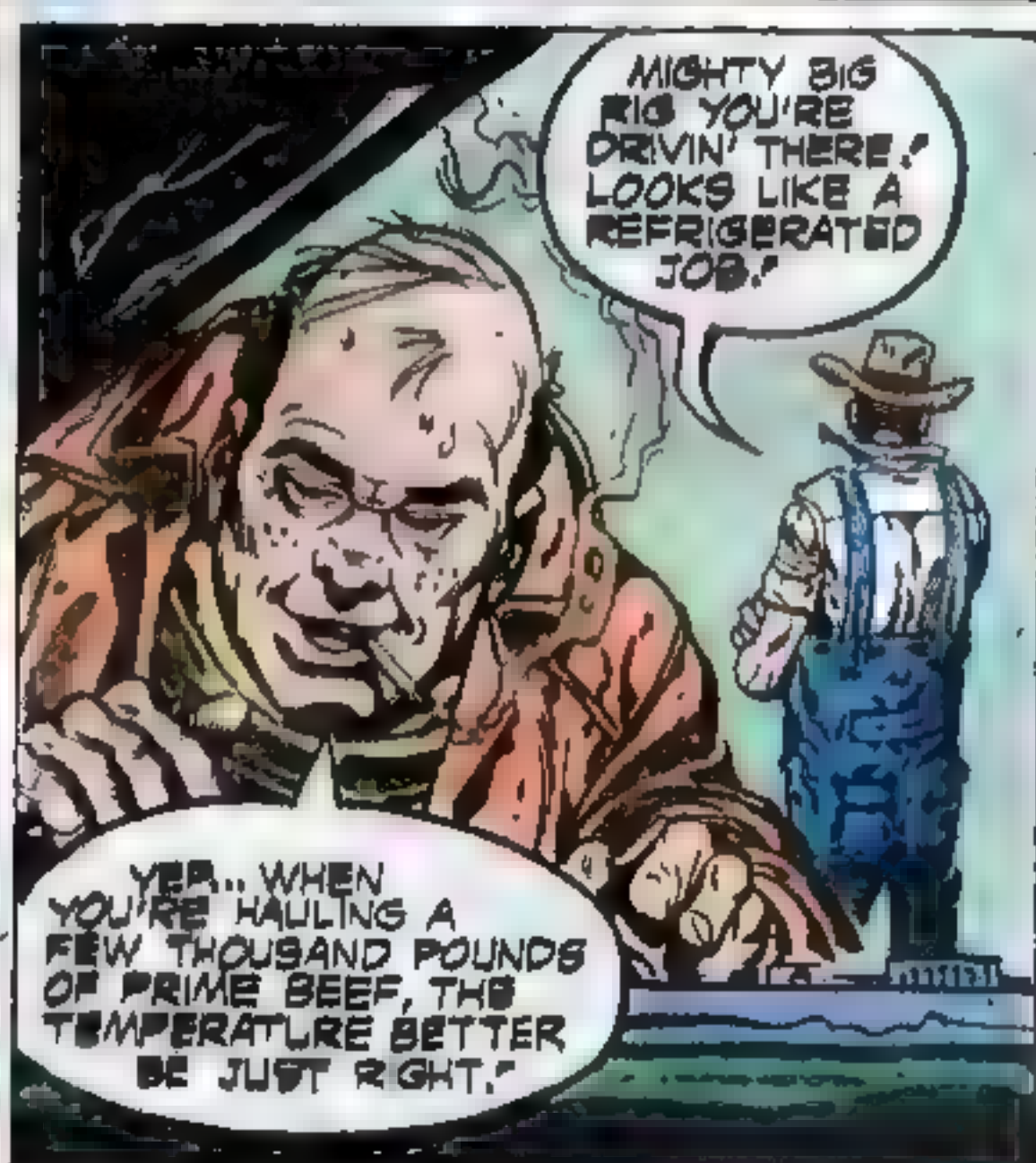
"\$15.74. FOR THIS A MAN WAS LEFT UPSIDE-DOWN, TO BECOME A FREEZE-DRIED CORPSE.?"

IT JUST DOESN'T FIGURE. WHO WOULD SWIPE A FEW LOUSY POUNDS OF BEEF-- AND LEAVE HUNDREDS OF BUCKS UNTOUCHED IN THE CASH REGISTER?



"I WAS STUMPED WITHOUT A SINGLE CLUE." IF I ONLY KNEW THEN WHAT I KNOW NOW -- THAT THE ELUSIVE KILLER WAS DRIVING PAST ME THAT VERY MOMENT..."







"IT WAS WELL PAST MIDNIGHT BY THE TIME A HIGHWAY PATROL CAR SPOTTED THE STRANDED SEMI--AND DISCOVERED THE DRIVER'S DEAD BODY." AS FOR THE REASON I WAS CALLED TO THE SCENE..."

HOW MUCH OF THE SHIPMENT WAS MISSING, SERGEANT?

NEARLY A HUNDRED POUNDS WORTH, LT. MASON. KILLER MUST'VE HAD A TRUCK OF HIS OWN TO CARRY OFF THAT MUCH FRESH MEAT.

AND THE DRIVER--HOW DO HE GET IT? A BULLET? KNIFE-WOUND?

ER...MAYBE YOU OUGHTTA TAKE A LOOK FOR YOURSELF, LIEUTENANT. YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT UNLESS YOU SEE IT.

"THE AMBULANCE ATTENDANTS LOOKED SORTA PALE, JUST LIKE THE SERGEANT." SOON AS I LIFTED UP THE BODY-SHEET I SAW WHY..."

OMIGOD, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS. WHAT...WHAT DID THE CORONER COME UP WITH?

W-WOULD YOU MIND IF WE TALKED OVER THERE SR... AWAY FROM THE BODY?

"I CAN SAFELY SAY THE CAUSE OF DEATH WAS A FIRST--SOMETHING THAT HAD NEVER SHOWN UP ON ANY OTHER POLICE RECORD..."

...YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING. A PERSON JUST DOESN'T DIE LIKE THAT.

THIS GUY DID, LIEUTENANT--

HE WAS TENDERIZED TO DEATH.

TENDERIZED?!

SPRINKLED WITH A FAST-ACTING POWDERIZED CHEMICAL THAT SOFTENS FLESH INTO DEAD PULP.

I'D HATE TO BE THE UNDERTAKER WHO HAS TO DRESS UP THE BODY, SIR.

"THE COLD FACTS HIT MY FACE LIKE A SPLASH OF ICE WATER." WE HAD A NUT CASE ON OUR HANDS--A PSYCHO WHO SLAUGHTERED PEOPLE LIKE MEAT--AND STOLE THEIR BEEF INSTEAD OF THEIR MONEY..."

SERGEANT... I WANT A DETAILED LIST OF ALL THE MEAT CUTS STOLEN FROM THIS TRUCK.

AND HAVE YOUR MEN CHECK OUT ALL THE CHEMICAL SUPPLY COMPANIES THAT CARRY ANYTHING RESEMBLING THAT TENDERIZING POWDER.



"12:27 PM, THE NEXT DAY." I WAS AT THE BLUEBLADE BAR AND GRILLE--BUT NOT TO HAVE LUNCH..."

WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF DEATH, DOC?

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS, MICK...

I'M AFRAID I WILL TRY ME.

BLUEBLADE BAR & GRILLE

HIS VEINS WERE FILLED WITH A SALT-WATER SOLUTION... A FORMULA VERY MUCH LIKE... LIKE...

C'MON, LET'S HAVE IT!

LIKE THE CURING SOLUTION USED TO PRESERVE HAMS?

"AS THE DOC'S WORDS SUNK IN, IT WAS NO SURPRISE TO LEARN THAT HALF THE DECEASED CHEF'S MEAT SUPPLY WAS FOUND TO BE MISSING..."

THE STOLEN BEEF IS ESTIMATED TO BE ABOUT FIFTY DOLLARS' WORTH, SIR?

DON'T GIVE ME ESTIMATES-- I WANT EXACT FIGURES--AND A SPECIFIC LIST OF EVERY CUT OF MEAT STOLEN!

GOT THAT?

"THAT NIGHT, DOWN AT HEADQUARTERS. ME AND MY RIGHT-HAND MAN RICHIE WENT OVER THE FACTS OF THE CASE..."

OKAY, LET'S GO OVER WHAT WE'VE GOT SO FAR--

OUR MURDERER IS WHACKED-OUT... BUT HE'S ALSO VERY METHODICAL ABOUT WHICH PIECES OF BEEF HE TAKES.

YOU SAID IT, MICK!

POINT TWO-- WE COMPARE THE LIST OF STOLEN MEAT WITH THE BEEF CHART--AND WE DISCOVER OUR MURDERER HAS TAKEN TWO OF EVERY CUT ON THE CHART--

JUST ENOUGH MEAT TO COMPLETE TWO COMPLETE SIDES OF BEEF. NO MORE, NO LESS.

RIGHT, MICK!



CONCLUSION?  
NOTHING  
CONCRETE YET...  
BUT MY GUT-  
INSTINCTS TELL  
ME THERE'S A  
DEFINITE  
PURPOSE TO  
THESE SICK  
MURDERS!

WHATYA  
YOU THINK,  
RICHIE?

YOU  
SAID IT,  
MICK!

ROUND  
RUMP  
LOIN END  
FLANK  
SHORT LOIN  
PLATE  
RIB  
BRISKET  
SHANK

"9:45 AM, NEXT MORNING." I WAS SLOSHING DOWN  
COFFEE AND A DANISH--UNWARE THAT THE KILLER WAS  
STALKING THE FASHIONABLE P. FRANK JETTY ESTATE..."

"THE JETTY BUTLER HAD JUST RETURNED  
FROM AN EARLY MORNING SHOPPING TRIP TO  
A DELICACY STORE..."

"... WHEN HE SUDDENLY BECAME VICTIM  
NUMBER FOUR..."

THWACK

"SOON AS THE BUTLER  
SLUMPED TO THE GROUND--  
THE MURDERER STARTED  
GOING TO WORK WITH A  
HAMMER AND NAILS..."

"... TO SLAP TOGETHER A SMALL SHACK  
AROUND HIS VICTIM, RIGHT WHERE HE LAY..."

POK POK POK POK

"AND AFTER HE HAD FINISHED HIS DIRTY WORK,  
THE KILLER MADE SURE HE GOT WHAT HE  
CAME FOR..."

"... THREE CERTAIN DELICACIES IN THE  
BUTLER'S SHOPPING BAG..."



"IT WAS A FRANK JETTY HIMSELF WHO CALLED THE FIRE DEPARTMENT-- AND THE FIRE CHIEF CALLED US WHEN HIS MEN DISCOVERED THE BODY..."

MR. JETTY ALERTED US WHEN HE SAW SMOKE POURING OUT OF THIS THING. WE FOUND HIS BUTLER SHUT UP INSIDE."

BURNED TO DEATH, I SUPPOSE."

NO, THAT'S TOO PAT--"

I'D SAY THE POOR GUY WAS PROBABLY SMOKED TO DEATH... SMOKED JUST LIKE A SIDE OF PORK."

YOU GUESSED IT ON THE NOSE, LEUTENANT."

TELL ME... WHAT KINDA NUT TAKES A HAMMER AND NAILS AND BUILDS A SMOKE-HOUSE FOR A MURDER-WEAPON??

"I KNEW THE ANSWER ONLY TOO WELL... 'CAUSE I WAS FINALLY TUNING IN ON MY SLAUGHTERING FRIEND'S SICK WAVE-LENGTH." I WAS STARTING TO UNDERSTAND HOW HIS MIND WORKED...

WE CALLED THE DELICACY STORE, SIR... AND GOT A LIST OF WHAT THE BUTLER BOUGHT."

ANYTHING MISSING FROM THE GROCERIES WE FOUND?

THREE THINGS, SIR-- A BEEF HEART, BEEF LIVER, AND A BEEF TONGUE!"

"BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THE MURDERS WERE STARTING TO MAKE SENSE TO ME NOW! I HAD COME UP WITH A WILD THEORY, BUT THERE WAS NO WAY TO CHECK IT OUT--

WHAT'VE YOU GOT, RICHIE?"

IT'S ABOUT THAT TENDERIZING POWDER. WE MANAGED TO TRACE A LARGE RECENT PURCHASE TO ONE RORY R. BASILLA, A CATTLE-RAISER WITH A RANCH OUTSIDE COLD-WATER CANYON."

"AT LAST!" THE BREAK I'D BEEN HOPING FOR. I GUNNED THE ACCELERATOR AND WAS ON MY WAY...

THANKS, RICHIE. GIVE ME A HALF-HOUR HEAD START, THEN SEND A SQUAD CAR TO THE RANCH TO BACK ME UP."



"AFTER PUSHING SEVENTY HEADING DUE SOUTH ON ROUTE 65, I REACHED THE BASILLA RANCH. NO ONE WAS IN SIGHT--NO PEOPLE, ANYWAY..

"MY P-38 WAS LOADED AND READY FOR TROUBLE.. AND I WAS READY FOR ANYTHING.. OR SO I THOUGHT..."

HOPE RICHIE'S TIP DOESN'T TURN OUT TO BE A BUM STEER!

BASILLA

...YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN ME, MORTIMER... I KILLED FOUR OF THEM LIKE THEY WERE SO MUCH MEAT--JUST THE WAY YOU'D HAVE WANTED ME TO!

THAT VOICE MUST BE BASILLA'S... BUT I WONDER WHO MORTIMER IS?

"I MADE MY WAY INTO THE RANCH HOUSE, ITCHING TO MAKE AN ARREST." BUT WHEN I FINALLY FOUND MY MAN--I GAGGED ON MY OWN TONGUE IN HORROR...

"I SUPPOSE DEEP DOWN I HAD SUSPECTED SOMETHING LIKE THIS... BUT THERE WAS NO WAY I COULD'VE BEEN READY FOR WHAT I SAW IN THAT HOUSE..."

HOLD IT, POLICEEEEEEE...

ARGHHH! OH NO, NO!

LOOK, MORTIMER... WE HAVE COMPANY. I HOPE OUR GUEST KNOWS A PRIZE STEER WHEN HE SEES ONE.

MORTIMER WAS BASILLA'S FAVORITE BULL... BUT IT WAS TAKEN TO THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE BY MISTAKE.

IN HIS SICK MIND, HE BELIEVED ALL THE MEAT CUTS HE STOLE WERE FROM HIS PRIZE STEER--

AND ALL HE WANTED TO DO WAS PUT MORTIMER BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.

NOW THAT YOU'VE HEARD THIS STORY, READER, MAYBE YOU'LL THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU EAT ANOTHER BIG JUICY STEAK. BUT DON'T TAKE IT AS HARD AS POOR LT. MASON-- HE CAN'T EVEN LOOK AT A HAMBURGER ANYMORE. CARE TO JOIN HIM FOR A SALAD?

END



# CAM'S GAME ROOM

